CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF
BUILDING AND SAFETY
201 NORTH FIGUEROA STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

RAYMOND S. CHAN, C.E., S.E.
SUPERINTENDENT OF BUILDING
INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER

October 24, 2013

Jack P. Moehle
T.Y. and Margaret Lin Professor of Engineering
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
760 Davis Hall
University of California, Berkeley
CA 94720-1710

Dear Professor Moehle,

The City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety appreciates the statement released to the press by the University of California Researchers describing the scope and the status of the Seismic Safety Study funded by the National Science Foundation.

As noted in the statement, the survey data is not complete; however, it indicates that approximately 1,500 structures in the City of Los Angeles are thought to be of reinforced concrete construction and constructed between roughly 1920 and 1980. The statement also notes that the purpose of this data is for quantifying the overall seismic risk associated with this building type and is not a seismic assessment of specific buildings. It further states that release of information regarding individual buildings that was compiled for a prescribed methodological purpose without a clear description of the methodological parameters and the scientific context could cause undue and unnecessary alarm.

The Department of Building and Safety values the perspectives of the scientific community in this field and is looking forward to reviewing the study once it is completed and published.

The City of Los Angeles is committed to the safety of its building stock and over the years has passed two mandatory seismic retrofit ordinances for unreinforced masonry buildings and tilt-up concrete buildings. The City has also established voluntary retrofit ordinances for soft story residential wood frame buildings and non-ductile concrete buildings.

Although the 1,500 older reinforced concrete structure database used in the study may not be a complete list of this building type, nor does this database reflect the structural integrity of specific buildings, the information may be useful to our Department and the City. The Department of Building and Safety would like to request any available data, including available lists of properties or structures that may assist the City in evaluating its building inventory.

Knowing that the University of California is committed to furthering public understanding of the seismic risk associated with this building type, the Department of Building and Safety is looking forward to working with the University of California Researchers in the near future to reach the common goal of providing seismically safe structures in the City of Los Angeles.

I would like to contact you to discuss this matter at your convenience. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (213) 482-6800.

Sincerely,

RAYMOND S. CHAN, C.E., S.E.
Interim General Manager